



Chapter 1: Defining the Problem

Domestic and sexual violence are not only crimes, they are public health and safety issues occurring in epidemic proportions in our state and nationally. One in three women will be a victim of domestic violence in her lifetime, and one in five women will be a victim of sexual violence. As many women will be affected by domestic violence this year as the number of men and women who will have heart attacks.¹ As significant public health and safety issues, both domestic and sexual violence require that the state, public officials and the public invest in finding a cure. The *State Plan on Domestic and Sexual Violence: A Guide for Safety and Justice In Arizona* is the first step in engaging all stakeholders in a common vision to that end.

Domestic violence is defined as “a pattern of behavior used to establish power and control over another person through fear and intimidation, often including the threat or use of violence.”² Domestic violence includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, and emotional/psychological abuse. The goal of all forms of domestic violence is to intimidate the victim into a state of fear and psychological dependence where the abuser is in complete control. Many victims are also financially dependent on the abuser, adding an additional barrier to leaving the abusive relationship. Moreover, the risk and severity of violence goes up when women attempt to leave their violent relationships; The National Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that the risk of domestic violence-related assaults, including homicides, increases immediately following separation.

¹ Dr. Dean Coonrod, “Domestic Violence as Public Health Issue,” presented 4/27/04

² National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, www.ncadv.org

Defining the Problem

Arizona’s State Plan on Domestic and Sexual Violence

"To effectively address domestic and sexual violence, victims must have services, offenders must be held accountable, and programs must focus on preventing intergenerational violence."

Governor Janet Napolitano
State of Arizona

Like domestic violence, rape is a crime of power and control. Myths that rape only happens to young, beautiful women wearing provocative clothing perpetuate the idea that rape is a crime of passion, when in fact all women are vulnerable to rape, regardless of age, race, class, education or physical appearance. Research also shows that 60-75% of rapes are premeditated and motivated by aggression and hatred, not sex.³ Another myth perpetuated about rape is that most rapists attack women they do not know. In fact, the Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network (RAINN) reports that approximately 66% of sexual assault victims know their assailants.⁴ However, only 39% of rapes and sexual assaults are reported to law enforcement, and rapes committed by acquaintances are much less likely to be reported than stranger rapes.⁵

Violence Against Women as a Public Health Issue

The National Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that domestic violence is the leading cause of injury for women ages 15-44. The number of men and women who will suffer from a heart attack per year (1.5 million) is the same as the number of women who are affected by domestic violence in a year.



In 2003, 9,473 women and children received services in Arizona shelters, but that number represents only one-third of the people who requested shelter — almost 2 out of 3 requests were unmet as a result of a lack of shelter beds.⁶ Women are not the only victims. The Arizona Department of Economic Security reports that 48% of individuals who spent time in shelter in 2003 were children. Children are also vulnerable to sexual violence—RAINN estimates that 44% of rape victims are under the age of 18, and 15% are under the age of 12. Men are also victimized by both domestic and sexual violence, although not at the same rates as women or children.

³ Minnesota Center Against Sexual Assault

⁴ RAINN (Detailed breakdown: 48% friend or acquaintance; 30% stranger; 16% intimate; 2% other relative; 4% relationship unknown)

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Arizona Department of Economic Security

According to the Blue Shield Against Violence Foundation, intimate partner violence accounts for 37% of women's visits to the emergency room, the most expensive location in which care is provided. A National Bureau of Justice Statistics study found that 63,800 victims of rape or sexual violence were treated in US emergency departments in 1994.⁷ According to a 1996 study by the National Institute of Justice, the average rape costs \$5,100, with the majority coming from medical and mental health care costs.⁸ Three percent of healthcare spending and 14% of injury related spending is due to interpersonal violence. Medical costs associated with domestic violence are \$1.8 billion!⁹

While organizations such as the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses have stated that screening for domestic violence should be a standard practice in medical settings, but screenings are still not routinely conducted.

Domestic and sexual violence are public safety issues that require the attention of law enforcement, the courts, probation, and corrections systems. Violence against women necessitates the attention of specialized law enforcement investigation teams and prosecutors. According to a 2002 Governor's Office survey of Arizona law enforcement agencies, police responded to a call involving domestic violence every 5 minutes and an arrest was made every 19 minutes. In 2003, there were 100 domestic violence-related homicides in Arizona.¹⁰ Domestic violence is one of the most dangerous calls law enforcement officers respond to. Not only are domestic violence incidents dangerous to victims and law enforcement, but also to neighbors, bystanders, family members and other witnesses.



Violence Against Women as a Public Safety Issue

⁷ U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics

⁸ National Institute of Justice, "Victim Costs and Consequences," 1996.

⁹ Dr. Dean Coonrod, "Domestic Violence as a Public Health Issue," presented 4/27/04

¹⁰ Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence, www.azcadv.org

Violence and Children

"As we learn the connections and become a bit more sophisticated in our approaches, we learn that we can't keep kids safe unless we keep their moms safe."

David Berns, Director
Arizona Department of Economic

Nationally, more than 3 million and perhaps as many as 10 million children witness domestic violence each year. In Arizona in 2002, law enforcement reported responding to 14,560 scenes of domestic violence where at least one child was present. This translates into one or more children being exposed to domestic violence every 36 minutes. Violence against women has a multitude of negative consequences for children including: depression, anxiety, poor academic performance, and an increased likelihood to become abusive or be abused as an adult. Growing up in an abusive environment makes men more likely to be abusive and women more likely to become victims.¹¹ There also is a high rate co-occurrence of domestic violence and child abuse. Research shows that the overlap between domestic violence and child abuse is between 30 and 60%.¹² In a recent Arizona Republic article, David Berns, Director of the Arizona Department of Economic Security, expressed the clear link between domestic violence and child abuse, "As we learn the connections and become a bit more sophisticated in our approaches, we learn that we can't keep kids safe unless we keep their moms safe."



¹¹ Edleson, Jeffrey L., Ph.D.(1999) "Problems Associated with Children's Witnessing of Domestic Violence." University of Minnesota, School of Social Work.

<http://www.vaw.umn.edu/documents/vawnet/witness/witness.html>

¹² Family Violence Prevention Fund, "The Effects of Domestic Violence on Children" www.endabuse.org

Violence Against Women and the Workplace

Domestic violence does not stay in the home— in fact, the Department of Justice estimates that 13,000 incidents of violence take place in the workplace annually against women by their intimate partners.¹³ The workplace can be dangerous for victims because their abusers know exactly where to find them during work hours. A person who is stalking, threatening, or actually committing violent acts can follow the victim to work, resulting in adverse outcomes for her and her co-workers. Those abusers who do not show up in person at the victim's workplace may use the telephone or e-mail to harass or stalk, resulting in intimidation and further loss of productivity.¹⁴ The Bureau of National Affairs estimates that domestic violence costs American businesses as much as \$5 billion a year in lost productivity and increased health care costs, with an estimated 8 million days of work productivity lost annually. Arizona employers have united their efforts to combat workplace violence in the Employers Against Domestic Violence organization (EADV). EADV reports that the majority of workplace violence incidents in Arizona are domestic violence related.

It is evident that domestic and sexual violence are pervasive in our state. To begin to impact real reform, domestic and sexual violence must be understood as public health and safety issues that impact all segments of our society.



¹³ “Violence and Theft in the Workplace,” U.S. Department of Justice, July, 1994

¹⁴ “Costs of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States” http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/pub-res/ipv_cost/index.htm

